

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EB-07 RSC-01 /019 W

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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMCMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 1277

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, SF

SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: SISHEN - SALDANHA RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION

REF: JOHANNESBURG 1243 AND 1252 AND STATE 257232

1. ISCOR INFORMED AMCONGEN TODAY (NOVEMBER 27) BY TELEGRAM THAT THE PERIOD ALLOWED FOR SUBMISSION OF REPLIES TO ITS QUESTIONNAIRE HAS BEEN EXTENDED; REPLIES ARE NOW DUE BY NOON TUESDAY 17 DECEMBER 1974.

2. ISCOR WAS ORIGINALLY UNWILLING TO GRANT ANY EXTENSION BEYOND DECEMBER 6. ISCOR WILL BE TAKING PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS ON A PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF THE TERRAIN, WHICH BIDDERS WOULD NEED TO SEE BEFORE BIDDING. THIS WEEK-LONG INSPECTION, PLANNED FOR LATE JANUARY/EARLY FEBRUARY (AND AT ISCOR'S EXPENSE) REQUIRED CONSIDERABLE PRELIMINARY PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION, BECAUSE IT WILL NOT ONLY INVOLVE AIR AND LAND TRANSPORTATION OVER WILD COUNTRY BUT ALSO THE PRESENCE OF NUMEROUS ISCOR AND OTHER TECHNICIANS AND SCIENTISTS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION BIDDERS WILL REQUIRE. ISCOR THEREFORE WANTS TO KNOW SOON WHICH COMPANIES AND HOW MANY WILL PARTICIPATE.

3. ISCOR QUERIED US WHETHER U.S. FIRMS REQUESTING EXTENSION HAD SEEN QUESTIONNAIRE AND REALIZED HOW BRIEF AND UNCOMPLICATED IT WAS. WE COUNTERED BY QUESTIONING WHETHER PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS COULD BE EXPECTED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS 1.6, 1.7 AND 1.10 AT THIS EARLY STAGE, AND THE REACTION WAS THAT EXPERIENCED FIRMS SHOULD BE IN POSITION TO KNOW WHICH SUB-CONTRACTORS THEY WOULD USE AND WHAT FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS THEY WOULD MAKE.

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4. ISCOR'S SPOKESMAN'S OVERALL COMMENT ON NOVEMBER 26 WAS THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE WAS "TO SEPARATE THE MEN FROM THE BOYS" AND THAT A LARGE AND EXPERIENCED COMPANY SHOULD BE ABLE TO FURNISH THE REQUIRED INFORMATION WITHOUT MUCH DIFFICULTY. APPARENTLY OUR REPRESENTATIONS, HOWEVER, HAVE PERSUADED ISCOR TO GRANT EXTENSION UNTIL DECEMBER 17.

5. AMCONGEN HOPES THIS ELEVEN-DAY EXTENSION WILL ENABLE U.S. COMPANIES LIKE MORRISON-KNUDSEN SUBSIDIARY TO ANSWER QUESTIONNAIRE TRANSMITTED BY OUR 1252, PERHAPS BY TELEGRAM DIRECT TO ISCOR. NO RPT NO CHANCE OF FURTHER EXTENSION.
GUTHRIE

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